

# Open Channels

## Corps Needs Your Help In Iraq, Afghanistan

by Mark Kane  
Rock Island District Public Affairs

The Corps of Engineers has proven to be an extremely valuable asset to the Global War on Terrorism, and numerous Mississippi Valley Division employees have volunteered and excelled while fulfilling rewarding duty in the Middle East.

While a steady number of Corps employees continue to volunteer for duty in support of the Corps' new Gulf Region Division (GRD) and the Afghanistan Engineer District (AED), the Corps recently established a recruiting initiative to ensure that employees are informed about the opportunities that are available and facilitate the hiring of Corps volunteers to deploy in support of GRD or AED.

This recruiting initiative has taken the form of two main efforts: one is a face-to-face forum where headquarters employees are personally visiting select districts to present information, and the other is to provide Internet and print resources and continued open dialogue so employees know how the Corps is involved and how they can be a part of that involvement.

Currently, the Corps has approximately 500 military and civilian employees in Iraq and Afghanistan.



**Chief of Engineers, LTG Carl Strock, addresses employees of the Gulf Region Division during a town hall meeting.**

There is a continuous need for volunteers with vital skills and experience in program management, contracting, administrative support, engineering, construction, budget and auditing, human resources and logistics. To date, approximately 2,000 Corps employees have deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

The workload at GRD and AED is increasing steadily and is expected to remain at a high level for two or more years. This creates a need to increase the current size of their staff and to sustain those levels for the near future. The purpose of this initiative is to encourage personnel with the requisite skills to volunteer for service overseas to meet upcoming peak workload.

### Why Volunteer?

Volunteering will give you the unique opportunity for a professional and personal challenge, adventure and national service. Not to mention the opportunity to help make history, a lasting contribution and experience a unique and distinctive culture overseas, while earning the benefits of increased compensation.

Keep in mind employees who deploy from an existing Corps jobs will create opportunities to backfill positions they leave behind.

Backfilling creates additional developmental opportunities and responsibilities for contributing offices.

**(see GRD, next page)**



## **-GRD-**

For longer tours of duty, employees may require a temporary change of station (tours usually last six months to one year). Unlike TDY, employees who opt for a TCS do not receive locality pay for the period of time they are deployed. The Office of Personnel Management determines the basic pay for their position.

Personnel electing this option will receive a relocation bonus of up to 10 percent of their base salary. Those who volunteer for a one-year TCS assignment will receive a relocation bonus not to exceed 25 percent of their base salary.

A relocation bonus does not count against the annual limitation on premium pay.

Employees are entitled to additional compensation including danger pay, post differential, separate maintenance allowance and premium pay.

All questions concerning the hiring procedures should be directed to the local CPAC.

Personnel interested in volunteering for deployment should access the web at [www.cpol.army.mil](http://www.cpol.army.mil) to identify current vacancies.

All personnel should apply using the vacancy announcements found at [www.cpol.army.mil](http://www.cpol.army.mil).

It's easy to apply. Go to the Army Civilian Personnel online home page, at [www.cpol.army.mil](http://www.cpol.army.mil), click on "employment opportunities in support of the Global War on Terrorism,"



**John Ashley (I), MVD civil engineer, and LTG Strock.**

then "employment opportunities with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers." Need more information?

There's no commitment or pressure for seeking more information and interested employees are encouraged to contact their emergency management offices.

## **Generally Speaking**

by Brig. Gen. Robert Crear  
Commander  
Mississippi Valley Division

I would like to start off my first Open Channels article by thanking each and every one of you who were involved in the recent Mississippi River Commission Low Water Inspection Trip. We were very fortunate to have Congressman Marion Berry from Arkansas, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works John Paul Woodley, Jr., Deputy Undersecretary for natural resources and environment, Department of Agriculture, Mack Gray, and the senior democratic staffers from the senate appropriations committee on part of our trip, and the effort put in by all to make it a most successful inspection trip.

I can't begin to describe to you what an honor and a privilege it is for me to return to the Mississippi

Valley Division this time as its commander. It is a deep feeling I carry inside of me to be a soldier serving this nation anchored here in my home town.

I have a true perspective of the talent that exists in this organization. I know when we tackle the challenges ahead us in the next fiscal year, with constrained budgets and a still transforming organization, success will follow our flag. In this column I want to address some of those key issues that will confront us over the next months and years. I will follow up at the many town hall meetings and district visits starting next week.

I laid out my philosophy already to the division staff,

but let me tell you before I make my way up and down the river, what that



philosophy is. My philosophy is summed up in three words -- do what's right. We must reward people for great work, listen to our partners and stakeholders, and empower our employees to "just do it." I look forward to meeting and dialoging with you at your job sites in the future.

**(see Crear, next page)**



**-Crear-**

## **What does it mean to be a Regional Business Center?**

Why do we want to be a regional business center? We must do our work better, faster and cheaper – or as our friends in the Air Force told me, “Walmart prices, FEDEX speed, and Kodac quality.” It is clear that the people we serve want us to do so and that as public servants we have an obligation to do so. Operating as a regional business center is just one of the ways that we are providing the nation and the people of the Valley with better, less expensive and timelier projects and services.

Operating as a regional business center means that the division acts like a single entity made up of interdependent offices rather than as six independent districts. When we do this right we improve quality and efficiency by bringing the best knowledge and talent to bear on all of our work. We improve timelines and reduce cost by avoiding duplicated work and by avoiding the time and cost of developing and maintaining capabilities that can’t be fully used by a single district. To not transform means we waste resources.

How will we make the regional business center work? There are a number of key elements we are currently undertaking to move the division toward the goal of operating as an effective regional business center. These include regional support functions, regional workforce management and regional overhead rates.

## **What are the Regional Support Functions?**

Under USACE 2012, there are five major support functions that we operate regionally.

They are resource management, information management, contracting, logistics and public affairs. I’m sure you all recognize that each of these provides a number of different services that we all need to get our work done.

Operating regionally means that the Regional Management Board and Division Command Council will determine the best way to perform each of these services. Because all of these services are different, there is no single approach that will give us the best results. In some cases, it may mean that we centralize a specific service in one office. In others, it may mean that we use a regional team to, for example, figure out how we are going to use new technology - taking the best qualified people, wherever they sit, and solving a problem only once rather than six or seven times. But rest assured – regionalization does not equate to consolidation!

## **What is Regional Workforce Management?**

Workforce management, or sometimes known as Workforce Planning, is the process of ensuring that the right people are in the right place, and at the right time to accomplish the mission. More specifically, it is a systematic process for identifying and addressing the gaps between the workforce of today and the human capital needs for tomorrow. There are four critical steps to workforce planning:

Step 1 – Assess the current workforce: Determining what our current work force resources are and how they will evolve over time through turnover, etc.

Step 2 – Analyze the future workforce: Developing the specifics for the kinds, numbers, and location of team members and managers we will accomplish our mission, goals,

and objectives.

This type of analysis is developed very closely with our strategic plans and what we want to look like i.e. types of work, in the future.

Step 3 – Identify the gaps: Determine what gaps exist between our current and projected workforce needs.

Step 4 – Develop strategies to address and resolve the gaps: Some of the strategies would include recruiting, training/retraining, leadership development, technological enhancements, etc. along with developing performance measures to assess strategic progress. Developing and implementing a Regional Workforce Plan sets-up the region for success by determining what the future workforce should look like. It enables us to bridge the knowledge gaps across the region. The plan serves as a tool to achieve maximum organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Finally, it allows us to integrate the actions of the districts into a regional business approach with common objectives.

## **What are Regional Overhead Rates?**

The Mississippi Valley Division has started the process of implementing regional rates as a USACE Pilot. What do regional rates mean? REGIONAL RATES is a term that represents the way the RBC will provide funds for its required operating costs, meeting its customers, partners, and stakeholders’ needs, in a responsive/timely manner at the least cost for quality services. The main purpose is to better support the delivery of our services and products through the districts.

(see Crear, next page)



### **-Crear-**

How is this going to work? Regional rates will combine all overhead cost into one of three rates, Consolidated Departmental Overhead (CDO), General and Administrative Overhead (G&A) and Consolidate Regulatory, Readiness and Operations (CRRO). The CDO Account will consolidate Planning, Programs and Project Management, Engineering, Construction, Real Estate and Contracting. The G&A Account will be the tradition G&A Organizations pooled. The CRRO Account will pool the overheads of the Regulatory, Readiness and Operations Overhead costs.

MVD will successfully transition to regional rates by managing the changes under the regional rate scenario successfully teaming the multiple Communities of Practice (CoPs) within the Mississippi Valley. The Resource Management Community will

orchestrate the needs of CoP management and provide tools and guidance to manage the fiscal requirements through the Regional Management Board. The process to manage regional rates will drive some cultural changes throughout the RBC. The CoP Leaders will work within their CoP to address level of service decisions, both within their own CoP and with the other CoPs within their consolidated overhead pool. (ie CDO and G&A). This will result in a synergetic approach led by CoP Teams. All MVD CoP members must proactively be involved in the development and management of their respective rates.

A new regional committee will manage the regional rates. This committee will be chartered as the Regional Program Budget Advisory Committee (RPBAC). The intent of this organization is to work tactically while the RMB works strategically. The RPBAC membership will be made up of the Resource

Management Community and the MVD CoP Leaders. The CoP Leaders active involvement in this process is a must for success. The RPBAC will report directly to the Division Command Council (DCC) and is empowered by the DCC to make out of cycle rate adjustments to achieve success of the process during the year.

It is safe to say that we have some huge challenges ahead of us, but not so difficult that this great team can't set the standard throughout USACE. As the only civil works division in the entire Corps, we face a unique and challenging time in our organization's and nation's history, but we also have more in common than any other division. If not now, when? If not MVD first, then who?

No one said the job was easy – because if it was, I believe they'd ask someone besides us to take it on. And take it on we shall – and I'll be right there with you as we transform the Corps, starting here in MVD. HOOAH!

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## **Mississippi River Commission completes “Low-Water” Inspection Trip**

by Karen Buehler  
Public Affairs Office  
Mississippi Valley Division

The Mississippi River Commission (MRC) conducted its annual “low-water” inspection trip on the Mississippi River, August 16-27, 2004.

Seven public meetings were held aboard the Motor Vessel MISSISSIPPI in selected towns along the river to allow Commission members the opportunity to meet with local residents and hear their concerns, ideas and issues.



**Gene Sullivan addresses the Mississippi River Commission in Memphis, Tenn.**

***(see MRC, next page)***



## **-MRC-**



**Ruby Johnson explains the plight of the local people and the need for flood control in the Yazoo delta during the Greenville, Miss. public meeting.**

The public meetings were held in La Crosse, Wis., Dubuque, Iowa, Alton, Ill., New Madrid, Mo., Memphis, Tenn., Greenville, Miss., and Houma, La.

Local interests presented their views and suggestions to the MRC on matters affecting the water resources infrastructure needs in the valley, including flood control and the Mississippi River and Tributaries project, environmental issues, recreation and navigation.

Brig. Gen Robert Crear, President of the Commission, presented a summary of national and regional issues affecting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Commission programs and projects on the Mississippi River and its tributaries. District commanders also presented overviews of projects in their areas.

“There’s nothing like getting out and interacting with the population,” said Crear, who is also commander of the Corps’ Mississippi Valley Division.

“I can’t ask for a better way to be confronted with issues within the valley by our stakeholders, customers and partners,” said Crear. “I also have the opportunity to physically see and feel the condition of our

infrastructure, and more importantly, to meet the employees of the valley,” he said.

“We have a lock system that was built in the 1930’s, that only had a 50 year life span,” said Crear. “I really admire our employees that work at these facilities, that use whatever resources they have to keep them running; it’s personal to them. People are our most important assets,” he said.



**Brig. Gen. Crear presents a copy of the MRC history “Upon Their Shoulders” at Morgan City, LA, Drew Willison, Senate, Democratic Staff Director, Appropriations, along with Nancy Olkewicz and Roger Cockrell.**

The MRC, organized in 1879, is composed of seven members, each nominated by the President of the United States and confirmed by the Senate. Three of the organization’s members are officers of the Corps of Engineers; one member is from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and three members are civilians, two of whom are civil engineers.



**(l-r) Lock Master Frank Robbins and MRC Members Brig. Gen. Crear, Mr. Angel, Mr. James inspect Lock & Dam 18 at Gladstone, Ill.**



**MRC members and staff inspecting Lock & Dam 19 in Keokuk, Iowa.**

General duties of the Commission include recommendation of policy and work programs, the study of and reporting upon the necessity for modifications or additions to the flood control and navigation project, recommendation upon any matters authorized by law, and making semi-annual inspection trips. The duties of the Commission included the entire length of the Mississippi River from its headwaters at Lake Itasca, Minn., to Head of Passes, La., where the Mississippi River empties into the Gulf of Mexico.

The purpose of the public meetings is to maintain a dialogue, an exchange of viewpoints and ideas flowing between the public and the Corps.

The public hearing process is unique to the Mississippi River Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The benefits of hearing first hand the issues and concerns through the public hearing process are invaluable to the Commission and the Corps. Also, the interaction with congressional, federal and state interests, local boards and non-government organizations and the public is crucial to the decision making process of the Commission.





# Loves Park Project Completed, Dedicated

by Mark Kane

Rock Island District Public Affairs

The end of the 12-year Loves Park Creek Flood Protection Project was highlighted Aug. 2 during its dedication ceremony, which brought many of the agencies and people together who made the project a reality for the City of Loves Park.

The project was a part of a joint effort between the City of Loves Park and the Rock Island District to protect industrial and residential areas from recurrent flooding.

The ribbon cutting at the dedication ceremony marked the official completion of the project and featured remarks by Congressman Don Manzullo; Mayor Darryl Lindberg, the mayor of Loves Park; Col. Duane Gapinski, district engineer, and officials from the City of Loves Park.

“Partnerships are vital to the completion of projects such as this one,” said Gapinski. “They prove to communities and taxpayers that we are making the most of our combined resources.”

“I congratulate the City of Loves Park and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for their hard work over the last several years to solve this problem,” said Manzullo. “Now that this project is completed, residents of Loves Park will no longer have to worry every time it rains. In addition, they will save a lot of money in flood insurance premiums that will no longer be necessary.”



**(From Left) Congressman Don Manzullo, former Loves Park Mayor Joe Sinkawic, current Loves Park Mayor Darryl Lindberg and Col. Duane Gapinski, District Engineer, cut the ribbon Aug. 2, during a ceremony celebrating completion of the Loves Park Creek Flood Protection Project. Photo by Roger Less, Engineering Division, Rock Island District.**

The project promises to keep homes and businesses dry even during the heaviest storms. More than 400 property owners along Loves Park Creek will be able to drop costly flood insurance, most likely within a year.

The private marketplace has added shops, restaurants and strip malls to Loves Park’s booming East Riverside Boulevard corridor, far from the Rock River. While the older commercial areas have not flooded for years, that stigma — among other problems — kept developers away. Now, at least one obstacle has been removed.

The Loves Park Creek Flood Protection Project consists of approximately 18,000 lineal-feet of improved channels and 236 acre-feet of storm water runoff flood storage in the Windsor Lake system.

The overall project cost including all planning, design, construction contracts, rights-of-way, and road and utility relocations was approximately \$30 million. The project was cost-shared between the federal government (75 percent) and the City of Loves Park (25 percent, which includes state funding).



**A scenic view of the South Lake portion of the Loves Park Creek Flood Protection Project.**



## Regorrah receives second Construction Management Excellence award

By Shannon Bauer  
Public Affairs Office  
St. Paul District

The U.S. Army Corps Engineers' headquarters selected St. Paul District employee Virginia Regorrah for the 2003 Construction Management Excellence award. This follows her selection as the Mississippi Valley Division recipient of this award last April.

The Construction Management Excellence award is given out annually by Corps headquarters to recognize excellence in construction management by construction field personnel. To compete at the Corps' headquarters level, she first had to be selected for the same award by the Mississippi Valley Division. Then, she competed against the nominees from eight divisions, representing 41 districts.

Regorrah received her award in St. Louis, Aug. 9, from Lt. Gen. Carl Strock, chief of engineers, during the Corps' annual Senior Leaders Conference.

Regorrah, who has been with the Corps of Engineers for four years, is the East Grand Forks resident engineer currently working on more than \$55 million in active construction contracts, including the East Grand Forks, Minn., and the Crookston, Minn., flood control projects. She received this award



photo by Tricia Liggett, St. Paul District

**Virginia Regorrah, St. Paul District, is resident engineer of the East Grand Forks, Minn., flood reduction project. She received the Corps' headquarter's 2003 Construction Management Excellence award in August.**

for successfully managing several major construction contracts and providing superior contract administration, as well as implementing effective partnering relationships, which facilitated the quick resolution of issues and kept the construction activities on track.

"Virginia [Regorrah] has truly embraced the team concept," said Bruce Boldon, the St. Paul

District's chief of construction, "and her routine inclusion of not only the Corps of Engineers' staff, but also city staff, the contractor and other interested parties to resolve all issues is a key part of her success."





# St. Paul, Rock Island participate in Grand Excursion 2004

by Shannon Bauer, St. Paul District  
Mark Kane, Rock Island District, also contributed to this story

The recent events of Grand Excursion 2004 introduced people region wide to the Corps of Engineers and its missions on the upper Mississippi River.

In addition to thousands visiting the Corps' locks and dams throughout the event, millions more witnessed it through television and newspapers.

Grand Excursion 2004, held June 25 to July 5, featured the largest riverboat steamboat flotilla in more than a century, recreating the original Grand Excursion of 1854. Both journeys began on rail in Chicago to Rock Island, Ill., then by steamboat upriver to St. Paul, Minn., with several stops in riverfront communities along the way.

According to the Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation, in June 1854, the original Grand Excursion was to be the catalyst for the explosive development of the upper Mississippi. The Chicago and Rock Island Railroad was the first railroad to reach the Mississippi and to celebrate, Henry Farnum Company, contractors for the railroad, proposed an excursion upriver. More than 1,200 dignitaries, politicians, media, business leaders and artists, including the 13th U.S. President Millard Fillmore, boarded rail cars to Rock Island and then five steamboats to St. Paul.

In 2004, the goal of the Grand Excursion was to honor years of community redevelopment work

by 40 cities in four states, as well as to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the original event that brought national and international attention to the region.

This time, seven steamboats, including the Anson Northrup, the Celebration Belle, the Delta Queen, the Harriet Bishop, the Julia Belle Swain, the Mississippi Queen and the Spirit of Peoria, carried around 37,000 passengers throughout the journey. According to Rob Pruden, Grand Excursion executive director, around 750,000 individuals lined the riverbanks from Rock Island to St. Paul.

Most of the steamboats began their journey in the Rock Island District June 25, after locking through Locks and Dam 15 in Rock Island. There, they were arranged into a grand flotilla, a title used when multiple paddlewheel riverboats came together for an event. The queens, the Mississippi and Delta, had to catch up with the flotilla at a later date because of high water. During the next few days, the flotilla made its way upriver through Lock and Dam 2 in Hastings, Minn., and ended its journey with a celebration that drew 250,000 in St. Paul July 3.

Both districts held special events in honor of the Grand Excursion. Additionally, around 12,000 people visited the two district's locks and dams to view the flotilla during what is usually an already busy time of year for the operators, the July 4 weekend.



Photo by Shannon Bauer

**The Julia Belle Swain, Spirit of Peoria and the Celebration Belle enter Lock and Dam 5 in Minnesota City, Minn., July 1.**

"The Grand Excursion was a great opportunity for the staff at the lock sites to showcase the excellent job the Corps of Engineers does maintaining and operating our locks and dams," said Dean Peterson, chief of the St. Paul District's lock operations. "The pride of ownership that all the lock personnel bring to work every day was demonstrated by the immaculate condition of the facilities."

"The extra effort they put forth created a very positive image of the Corps of Engineers in the eyes of the thousands of people that visited the sites," he continued. "Plain and simple — they did a fantastic job."

(see Excursion, next page)





Photo by Shannon Bauer

**Upper Area Lockmaster Joe Dvorak works at Lock and Dam 2 in Hastings, Minn., July 3.**

In Rock Island District, employees from the Mississippi River Project Office, Visitor Center, public affairs and security coordinated historical tours of Rock Island Arsenal Island. The Grand Excursion tour bus continuously ran from its hub at the Isle of Capri in Bettendorf, Iowa, to the island June 25-26. More than 300 people took advantage of the historical tours. Tours of Lock and Dam 15 were also provided.

That weekend, more than 1,100 people came through the Visitors Center, 14 lock and dam tours were given to 247 people and four bike tours were given to 43 people. "The staff put a lot of time and effort to make this all possible," said Wendy Frohlich, Mississippi River Visitor Center.

Across the street from the Rock Island Visitor Center, the district's Clock Tower Building also saw large crowds. Nearly 400 people viewed a photographic exhibit, featuring Henry Bosse prints of the Upper Mississippi River. Bosse took nearly 300 photographs of scenes along the Upper Mississippi River between 1883 and 1892, while employed as a Corps' photograph-draftsman.

Bob Romic, Rock Island information management, was instrumental in putting together the 75-piece Bosse exhibit.

Additionally, he co-staffed the exhibit much of the time with Steve Vacek from the Mississippi River Project Office.

St. Paul District hosted open houses at three locks and dams in celebration of the Grand Excursion.

Lock and Dam 8 in Genoa, Wis., held an open house and gave tours to around 700 visitors. Another 300 stopped by to watch the flotilla. "It was great having so many people interested in our operation," said lockmaster Ted Engeli. "It was time well spent and a great day for all."

Lock and Dam 6 in Trempealeau, Wis., held three open houses, drawing around 950 people. An additional 4,500 came just to see the flotilla. Local citizens dressed up in period costumes and a jazz band was commissioned by the city to provide the excursionists a 'grand' welcome as they entered the lock. An actor dressed up as former President Fillmore to reenact the president's 1854 speech in Trempealeau, and another played his daughter, Abby, to reenact her horseback ride up the river bluff.

The crowds at Lock and Dam 6 were 10 to 15 people deep along the entire fence, said Terry Jessesky, central area lockmaster. "The Grand Excursion activities in Trempealeau produced outstanding results."

Lock and Dam 4 in Alma, Wis., saw 850 people during its open house and another 1,000 to watch the flotilla. The staff there set up historical displays on the history of Lock and Dam 4.

Throughout Grand Excursion 2004, the natural resources staff out of the La Crescent, Minn., office also got involved in publicizing the Corps' missions. Natural resource specialists talked about the Corps and the Mississippi River with around 1,200 excursionists. Additionally, they set up a Corps exhibit in Genoa, Wis., for the city's Grand Excursion celebration.

Kurt Brownell, natural resources, said, "I had a lot of people stop by and express interest in what the Corps does. It was fun, just walking around and talking to people about the Corps. It was a very positive experience. I thoroughly enjoyed it."



Photo by Shannon Bauer

**Ivette Garrett, St. Paul District office of council, and Dean Peterson, St. Paul District chief of lock and dam operations, assist with the public at Lock and Dam 2 in Hastings, Minn., July 3.**



# Regulatory Deploying New Database for Permits

By Nicole Dalrymple  
St. Louis District

Congress charges the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with regulating portions of the Rivers and Harbors and Clean Water Acts. To accomplish this requires a vast amount of data that locates sites, describes them in all ways and shows multiple interrelationships between what was, is and is proposed to be there.

Decision making for St. Louis District Regulatory Branch specialists requires an extraordinary level of detailed knowledge of virtually every square inch of the 28,000 square miles of the district. That same level of knowledge is required throughout the Corps.

On June 8-11 the St. Louis District's Regulatory Branch hosted a national workshop that addressed new initiatives and programs impacting the regulatory Community of Practice Corps wide.

Since 1991 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has used a program called RAMS - the Regulatory Analysis and Management System - to manage its regulatory permit process. A new program, the OMBIL Regulatory Module, known as ORM, has been created to replace RAMS.

ORM is intended to centralize and streamline the regulatory process, help reduce the number of data calls from headquarters and eliminate quarterly reports.

"All districts will use the same process," explained Carol Cotter, St. Louis District's regulatory



Photo by Alan Dooley, St. Louis District

**Carol Cotter (L) and Jen Godfrey discuss implementation and capabilities of the new Regulatory database system, ORM. Cotter has led the St. Louis District's effort to bring the new database into mainstream use throughout the Regulatory Branch there and envisions an almost infinite variety of other uses for the visual system District, Division and even Corps-wide. Jen Godfrey, a recent addition to the District Regulatory Branch brings a fresh eye to the work and is enthusiastic about its possibilities for replacing paperwork presenting all aspects that might impact a regulatory decision in one location.**

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Administrator and cartographer. Cotter was instrumental in organizing and running the workshop.

The workshop was a pivotal meeting that allowed the ORM National Steering Committee to meet for the first time and discuss issues facing the system's deployment and define committee member's roles and responsibilities.

Headquarters' Dave Olson leads the diverse committee comprised of 15 people from districts including Baltimore, Jacksonville, Huntington, Little Rock, Omaha, Portland, Rock Island, San Francisco, Vicksburg and Wilmington.

The process of integrating ORM has been situated into four levels. The first level is to introduce GIS, into the existing software. An advisory committee that Cotter sits on has been working on the integration of GIS since November 2002.

Many districts did not have GIS integrated into their permit process already; St. Louis didn't until this March. "Our project managers were still using hard copy maps for their geographical information," Cotter explained.

(see Cotter, next page)





## **-Cotter-**

Cotter has been working alongside contractor Teresa Silence, a GIS Program Manager with Applied Data Consulting, on the integration. "The ORM steering committee is working the 'who' and 'what' of the database, and we're working the 'where' piece," Silence said, explaining the value of the mapping technology.

Silence's company created custom tools that work within the framework of ArcView GIS, a software program.

"This has been a spiral development," Silence said. "We've given them a prototype and built incrementally from there. We've been getting feedback from the PMs on what they want."

Currently Ward Lenz and Shawn Sullivan are the district's power users in regulatory, but after a branchwide hands-on training session, many other regulators are pushing the limits of the system. "I can barely keep up with their requests for more data," said Cotter.

In trying to explain the program, Cotter, who is responsible for adding and maintaining the system's data, said to think of a sandwich. "The bottom piece - your bread - is the terrain. Then depending on what information the regulators need, they can turn on or off certain layers, like the cheese, meat, lettuce, tomato, etc." Some of the possible layers include streams, current area permits, soil polygons, streets and schools. The possibilities are endless.

The power users, along with Chief of Regulatory, Danny

McClendon, have been instrumental in shaping the system's tools and capabilities. For instance, McClendon requested that the system show the location of all mitigation sites.

The system can measure the length of a creek to help the regulators determine jurisdictional authority. There's also an option to select a specific area in GIS and generate a printable map that can be used in public notices or elsewhere.

The second level of ORM integration is the ability to pull data from ORM. This step resulted in the development of a bridge between the ArcView software and the ORM database. When the St. Louis regulatory branch has its data transferred from the RAMS system to the ORM server, they will be able to read directly to the ORM database.

"When they first started transferring information in other districts it didn't move over correctly," Cotter explained. "Some points ended up in oceans and off course."

The St. Louis District has information related to 26,000 permits that will have to make the transfer. To prevent problems, Cotter requested an interim database. "We're taking the lessons learned from the other districts and deploying differently," she said. "All conversion of data to ORM is scheduled for the end of August."

Level three, where regulators will be able to write to ORM 'live', is in production right now and nearing completion. "No one is currently using level three," Silence said.

St. Louis District is scheduled to be the first district to write information 'live' into the system. The information added by the district will go directly to the national database and be there instantly. The system updates in real time.

Level four is the future vision, an integration of GIS and ORM, "We want to leave the door open so that information can be shared between different disciplines and districts," Silence said.

"We want to be able to take the Lego pieces and be able to interchange and share them between districts," Cotter said. "In the future they could lay in different pieces of the 'sandwich' such as cultural resources, endangered species info, archaeological sites, real estate, Corps lands, etc. It would be a great tool for everyone."

The work between the ORM and GIS committees has "really a grass roots thing" focused on making the program a functional tool for regulators, Cotter said. "We're impassioned to have a working tool and we've had a really good team effort from districts all across the community."

So Corps regulators have taken a giant stride toward answering a lot of questions, ensuring ORM is a workable tool and incorporating the Community of Practice into the process.



# Memphis District hosts hurricane exercise

By Nicole Dalrymple  
St. Louis District

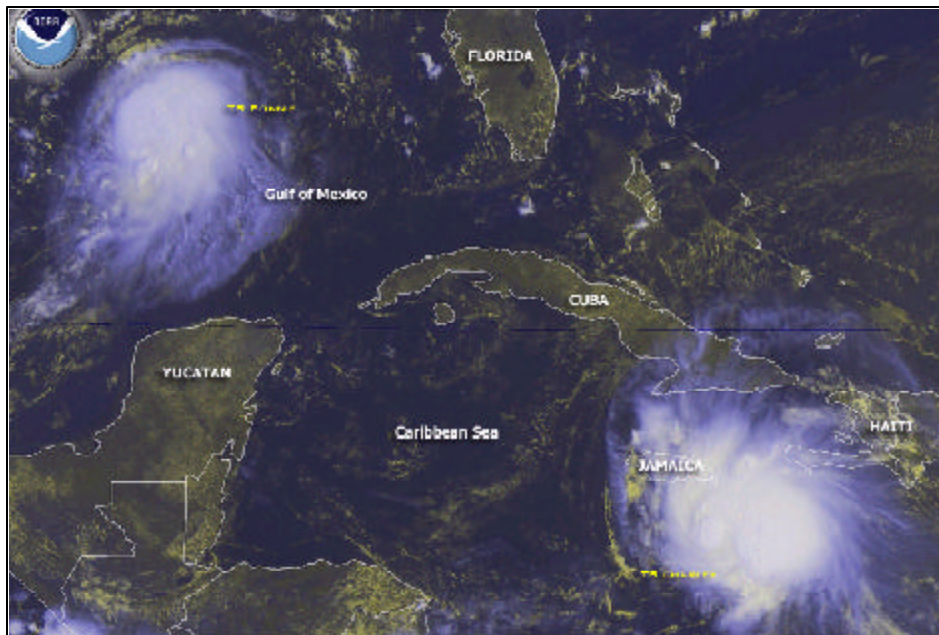
Its name was Charlotte, and it struck on Aug. 11 with 110 mph winds. Hurling storm surges of 6-8 feet against the coast, it left scores of New Orleans residents injured and thousands homeless. Luckily, it all took place in a large room located in the Memphis District's Readiness Branch, and no one there even got wet.

Ironically, while more than 35 people from four districts, the Mississippi Valley Division and headquarters were in Memphis for just a hurricane exercise, two very real, growing tropical storms swirled menacingly in the Gulf of Mexico. Either one could have spun itself into a full-blown hurricane and struck New Orleans or the Louisiana coast – exactly what these people were preparing for.

According to Patsy Fletcher, Memphis District Readiness Branch chief, the Memphis District has a special importance with regard to hurricanes that may hit the New Orleans area.

"If New Orleans is being threatened by a hurricane, FEMA may give the Corps of Engineers pre-declaration missions," she said. "Those pre-declaration missions are usually for ice, water and power.

"The problem comes in when, if New Orleans is hit and the city is flooded, that district may become a victim district. The idea behind this is Memphis District starts the execution. In the event that New Orleans is hit, Memphis can carry on with those missions. If we start the mission and New Orleans is not hit,



NOAA photo

**Bonnie and Charley: Two real tropical storms swirled in the Caribbean as emergency leaders gathered in Memphis for a hurricane exercise.**

we can transition those missions to them and they can pick up any new missions from FEMA."

At the exercise held in Memphis, the participants had a variety of objectives. They were tasked with:

- Reviewing and discussing Mississippi Valley Division hurricane plans.
- Exercising the command and control of executing emergency response activities for a New Orleans hurricane.
- Presenting key command decisions within the Mississippi Valley Division hurricane plans.
- Reviewing and discussing the criteria for decision-making.
- Reviewing and discussing the roles each office plays in plan execution.

Jennifer Chang, a Headquarters employee working in the Memphis District on a developmental assignment, and Kevin Woods, a Memphis District civil engineer also on a developmental assignment, did much of the work to put the exercise together.

"We looked at the historical information about Hurricane Lilly (the 2002 storm used as the model for the exercise), then we went through the Memphis paperwork that was generated to see how the missions were received, when they were received and how they were executed," Chang said. "From there we built scenarios and got appropriate graphics to display so we could guide the participants through the exercise.

(see Hurricane, next page)





photo by George Stringham

**Left to right, Col. Richard Jenkins, MVD Deputy Division Engineer, Col. Charles Smithers, Memphis District Commander, Con-Ops Chief Dave Cash (center) and Pat Tucker, MVD Readiness Branch, (standing on right), confer during a break in the exercise.**

“The exercise itself was generated by Jack Hurdle – someone who has been through a lot of hurricane and disaster management experiences. He was able to add a lot of color commentary to the slides being projected,” she said.

Fletcher said she was pleased with the way the exercise went.

“We learned that we have a good plan,” she said. “It’s good to have one district be the backup for another. We have some work to do in consolidating the plans throughout the division. Where we (the Memphis District) would go in and execute the FEMA missions, St. Louis goes in and carries out the civil works missions. They have a plan, we have a plan, New Orleans has a plan, division has their contingency plan that ties them all together. We need to do more work on tying those plans together.

“Also, everyone has their rosters of people involved. We found out that we have some work to do to make sure we have the right people on the right teams and going to the correct locations.

“We also learned from this that we have more work to do if the Memphis District becomes a victim district, say, from an earthquake,” she added. “Do we have everything in place so that someone else could take over the Federal Response Plan mission for us?”

Fletcher said following the exercise, the emergency managers present got together and came up with a list of important tasks. They also assigned dates by which those tasks must be accomplished.

“The most important thing was to make sure the personnel rosters are up to date and kept that way,” Fletcher said.

“We seem to get waves of retirements, people moving up into new positions where they wouldn’t be able to deploy and we also have people that may be in Iraq for several months. Our first step is to get those worked out.”



photo by George Stringham

**Memphis District Readiness Branch Chief Patsy Fletcher (left), makes her point with Bill Fredericks, weather forecaster at the Mississippi Valley Division, and Dean Slaton, Memphis District Finance Officer.**



# Bridging the funding gap

By Eric Lincoln  
Public Affairs, New Orleans District

Don't laugh if you see a tip jar on a project manager's desk.

Funding for Corps projects has decreased to the point that some completion dates have been pushed back three years or more. Project managers are wondering where their project will be in the next fiscal quarter. Other districts are planning to downsize their workforce.

For the New Orleans District, it's been a tough year for Construction General in particular, as the budget continued its downward trend, falling from \$375 million in 2001 to \$337 million last year.

And even though the district paid off a \$9 million debt to contractors in '04, "If additional funds are not given to the district this fiscal year, then our current \$11 million debt to contractors will have to come from FY 2005 funding," said Marcia Demma, chief, Programs Management. "At the rate we're going, FY04 unfunded liabilities may be as high as \$30 million by the end of September."

With that much debt going into FY05, it's hard to see where new funding for projects will come from, or if it will come at all.

"We know that project managers see no money for their project and there's concern," said District Deputy John Saia.

"In past years, the district was funded at higher levels, and we were also able to get funds from other districts. But in the last two years, there haven't been much funds besides appropriations from Congress."

Naturally, he said, if this carries into next year, "it would put us into another difficult situation."

## Shifting funds

One improvement might be to ease restrictions on shifting of funds between projects.

Currently, the district is not able to transfer surplus funds from high-visibility projects. Headquarters is working with Congress to change this restriction.

Regardless, funding would not be as high as needed, said Saia.

"We would need another \$100 million to help us stay on schedule ... we probably won't get it, consequently, next year the district will likely award less contracts."

But while some districts are granting early outs and cutting jobs, the New Orleans District may get good news in the long run. It has some of the largest projects in the Corps, and is awaiting additional authorizations in the upcoming Water Resources Development Act.

## Lighting the way

With strong support from the Administration and Congress, "LCA is the bright light for the future of the district," said Demma. "It would be very good if the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) is extended past 2009, with Sen. Breaux retiring."

Co-authored by Sen. John Breaux, CWPPRA was enacted in 1990 and is informally known as the Breaux Act.

## Holding pattern

Meanwhile, other projects are in limbo.

"You could say funding is a little short right now," said Bill Maloz, project manager for Morganza to the Gulf. "We have \$4 million this FY and need \$10 million. For FY05, we're anticipating add-ons from Congress to the President's \$1.5 million, plus the local sponsors advance of \$2 million for FY05 ... there's no guarantee we'll get it."

*(see Funding, next page)*





### **-Funding-**

We're doing productive work, but it will be tough for us to pick up momentum again if funding falls."

Jackie Purrington, project manager for the Inner Harbor Navigational Canal Lock Replacement Project, said the project slipped from completion in 2013 to 2016 because of inadequate funding in the last couple of years.

"In '04, the President's proposed budget was \$7 million, our capability was \$20 million and Congress gave us \$13 million. For '05, the President's proposed budget is \$10 million, and we need \$24 million to stay on schedule.

"The ironic thing is that besides slowing us down, this actually increases costs ... we have to just continue to move forward as much as possible."

Al Naomi, project manager for the Category 4-5 Hurricane Protection Feasibility Study, said the project isn't funded at all in FY05.

"There is a reluctance to allow the initiation of new study phases now, so unless the Senate adds funds, we won't be able to do anything. It means another year we'll be vulnerable to a Category 4-5 storm, and we were already looking at 10 to 20 years before project completion."

### **No hiring, no firing**

Luckily, jobs at New Orleans District are not on the chopping block, said Saia.

"It's very clear to us that we need the current staff to be sustained over the long haul," said Saia.

"Our jobs are important, and the need for our expertise and capabilities is there.

"We will continue to have retirements and normal losses in staff, so there doesn't need to be a reduction in force, long- or short-term. We may not fill certain positions once they're vacated. And we don't intend to impede promotions or hiring in positions that need to be filled.

"We are taking action to move people on a voluntary basis within the district, to balance out the workload ... there are some people working all day until 2 a.m., while others are saying, 'I don't have work.' We've got to adjust that."

In general, hiring outside of the district could be constrained, he said, and no new students will be hired until FY05.

### **Bridging the gap**

A new team has been formed to address ways we can fill the void between now and when additional funding is received.

Col. Peter Rowan, commander, formed a "Bridge Team" from members of the District Operating Team (DOT), including assistant division and branch chiefs, that will, among other duties, review and approve resources entered into P2, provide manpower assessments for each office, form an outreach team to enhance technical capabilities,

and conduct monthly meetings to review vacant positions.

Advising the team are John Saia, Denise Frederick, Bruce Terrell, Greg Breerwood, Walter Baummy, Bill Lewis, Audrey Tilden, Brenda Weber, Cheryl Weber and Mike Zack.

"We're feeling our way through it," said Mike Park, Operations, who as DOT leader is helping organize the Bridge Team. "It's evolving as we go, and we're doing a lot of brainstorming. It's not a simple task."

On the bright side, other options are available to the district right now, said Saia.

"MVD is a center of expertise for ecosystem restoration. We can pool our resources, provide support to DOD and other districts in our region and enhance our technical capabilities and training opportunities.

"Support of Iraq helps a lot, as well. We're reducing costs here, and our people return with more experience and technical skills."

Looking at the next few years, "We're going to need to be careful in how we manage resources, and we'll need everyone's cooperation ... we want a collaborative atmosphere to ensure a balancing of resources.

"Over 30 years, we have \$26 billion worth of projects, including hurricane protection and coastal restoration. That's much higher funding than we have today ... so there's no doubt that New Orleans District will be leading the nation in civil works programs for many years."